

When he got in, he started to look at ways to implement that. Then the Senate reacted. You have long-term strategic interests represented by this body, and a very famous Senator of the President's own party—Jimmy Carter was a Democrat, and Senator Scoop Jackson of Washington State was a well-known Senator and well-known foreign policy national security expert. He led a delegation of Senators to South Korea. They looked at this issue in detail after President Carter was elected. They came back to Washington after this trip, and they said: It is not a good idea to remove our forces, which have kept the peace on the Korean Peninsula since 1953. We don't think this is a good idea.

The story goes that Scoop Jackson actually went to the White House, talked to President Carter, and said: The Senate is going to oppose this. You are going to have a hard time removing these troops.

So we have a role to play here; we have had a role to play here; and we have played this role.

I want to end with one final anecdote from that trip. The Senate Navy liaison officer who helped lead that delegation of Senators in the late 1970s to South Korea was a Navy captain by the name of JOHN MCCAIN. Yes, that is right; the JOHN MCCAIN whom I mentioned we are all praying for, and by the way, we named this bill after him. This is the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act. The current chairman of the Armed Services Committee who wrote this bill was on that trip as a captain in the U.S. Navy. I think that historical fact makes this provision in the current bill we are debating now, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act, even more powerful.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I was unable to appear in the Chamber today to vote on the nomination of Kenneth L. Marcus, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the Department of Education due to official business away from the Senate. I

would like the record to show that I oppose his nomination and would have voted against his confirmation.

Throughout his confirmation process and career, Mr. Marcus has demonstrated consistent disregard for the rights of the very students he would be expected to protect in this role: women, LGBTQ individuals immigrants, and students of color. It is clear that Mr. Marcus is in lockstep with the Department of Education in this regard. He has supported the Department's decision to dismantle critical title IX protections for survivors of sexual assault, stood in the way of LGBTQ students seeking an educational atmosphere free from discrimination, and refused to commit to protecting a child's constitutional right to an education regardless of immigration status.

Mr. Marcus has made abundantly clear that he is unfit to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the Department of Education. I would like the record to show that I oppose his nomination and would have voted nay during today's confirmation vote.

(At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

• Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent for vote No. 118 on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 603, the nomination of Kenneth L. Marcus, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Department of Education. On vote No. 118, had I been present, I would have voted nay on the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 603.●

TAX REFORM

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, as you may know, I supported the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that became law in December of last year. We hear stories every day of the positive impact this law has had on the economy at large and in the lives of Americans who are seeing more money in their paycheck. What we don't hear are enough stories about the small businesses that have benefited from this law. As chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I supported this legislation because I believed that it would spark investment, increase economic growth, and reduce taxes for millions of small businesses whose work ethic and perseverance shows that the American Dream is still possible. I also saw the potential that the legislation would have, not just to help small business owners and their employees in my home State of Idaho, but to positively affect small businesses across the country. A couple of weeks ago, I began this series of speeches highlighting small businesses that have benefited from this legislation.

While there are numerous stories about the benefits of tax reform, I rise

today to talk about the story of the Don Ramon Restaurante Cubano and Social Club located in West Palm Beach, FL. Dina and Juan Rubio are the operators of this successful restaurant that offers traditional and affordable Cuban dishes in charming surroundings. Don Ramon Restaurant also offers catering services, provides live music, and hosts private events. Often, Juan will take the stage with his keyboard and entertain patrons with his rollicking renditions of traditional Cuban dances such as the salsa, son, and guaracha. This dedication to an authentic Cuban experience over the last 27 years is what has made this restaurant a popular culinary destination and landmark for people all over south Florida.

From Cuba and Nicaragua respectively, Dina and Juan appreciate the opportunities afforded everyone by the American Dream and have worked hard to realize their goal of becoming successful entrepreneurs. New tax law changes implemented under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act have allowed Dina and Juan Rubio to give their employees pay increases and larger holiday bonuses than normal. This law has also allowed them to begin planning capital improvements for their restaurant. They are planning to renovate their restaurant, open a take-out window, install new refrigerators and coffee machines, and hire up to eight new employees. Stories like the Rubio's demonstrate the benefits that tax reform has already had on numerous small businesses. Overall, it can be said that tax reform was a worthy goal that has increased small businesses' optimism, employee bonuses and wages, lowered taxes, and driven new capital investment.

REMEMBERING EMMETT PUGH III

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. President, I wish to acknowledge the recent loss of one of West Virginia's best and brightest and recognize the life of a good man, kind friend, and dedicated public servant, Emmett Pugh III.

Emmett was widely known for his accomplishments as the city of Beckley's longest serving mayor, and while his positive impact on the city was immeasurable, Emmett was the sort of person who had a positive impact on the lives of everyone he met. Countless people benefited from the work, words, and kindness of Emmett Pugh throughout his life.

Emmett was a native son of Beckley, WV, and came from a long tradition of public service that followed him to the University of Alabama. While at Alabama, he cultivated a deep love for two things: the Crimson Tide and his hometown. After earning a degree in political science, with a focus on State and local government, Emmett returned home to serve as the president of Bowl-Wick, Inc., a bowling center that brought joy and entertainment to the citizens of Beckley for many years.